

Message Text

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54

ACTION EUR-25

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R 300805Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

TO SECSTATE WAWSHDC 5187

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY BONN

UFHNA/USMISSION NATO 1409

C O N F I D E N T I A L VALLETTA 0180

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MT

SUBJ: COMAIGN TO SPLIT MALTA LABOR PARTY

1. SEVERAL RELIABLE SOURCES HAVE CONFIRMED RUMORS OVER PAST MONTH THAT FERDINAND ANTHONY COLOMBO, AN OLD MINTOFF POLITICAL FOE, IS ATTEMPTING TO FORCE A SPLIT IN THE MLP IN ORDER TO FORM A NEW POLITICAL PARTY IN OPPOSITION TO HIM.

2. COLOMBO IS A MEDICAL DOCTOR WHO SERVED AS MINISTER OF FINANCE DURING THE 1947-1950 LABOR ADMINISTRATION OF P.M. PAUL BOFFA. FOLLOWING MINTOFF'S SUCCESS IN OUSTING HIM AND BOFFA FROM THE MLP. COLOMBO BECAME A MISSIONARY PRIEST AND SERVED IN INDIA FOR THE PAST TWENTY-THREE YEARS. WE UNDERSTAND THAT HE HAS RETURNED TO MALTA TO TAKE UP HIS CUDGEL AGAINST MINTOFF ONCE AGAIN, THAT HE HAS GIVEN UP THE CLOTH AND IS SUPPORTING HIMSELF AS A PHARMACIST.

3. AMONG THOSE COLOMBO IS SAID TO BE ATTEMPTING TO RECRUIT ARE LABOR M.P.'S JOE MICALLEF STAFRACE, VINCENT MORAN,
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ALBERT HYZLER, DANIEL MICALLEF AND EX-POLICE COM-

MISSIONER ALFRED BENCINI. ALL BUT MICALLEF ARE
KNOWN TO HAVE QUARRELED WITH MINTOFF, AND THEIR
INCLUSION IN THIS SPECULATION IS NOT SURPRISING.
MICALLEF IS VERY RELIGIOUS, WAS A CHRISTIAN WORKERS
PARTY M.P. BEFORE HE SWITCHED TO MLP, AND IS
THE TYPE THAT MIGHT WELL BE ATTRACTED TO COLOMBO.
WHILE HE HAS COMPLAINED TO US ON MINTOFF'S TACTICS
AND FAILURE TO KEEP MLP PARLIAMENTARY GROUP INFORMED,
HE HAS GIVEN US NO INDICATION THAT HE IS READY TO
BREAK WITH HIM.

4. COMMENT: WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT COLOMBO HAS MUCH
OF A CHANCE TO DEVELOP ANY SIGNIFICANT OPPOSITION TO
MINTOFF AND VERY MUCH DOUBT THAT THE M.P.'S
MENTIONED WILL ACTUALLY DEFECT FROM MLP REGARDLESS
OF PERSONAL ANOMOSITIES TOWARD HIM.GETZ

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To: STATE
Type: TE
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